

V.I.P. NEWS

(volunteers in print)

AIDS Network of EDMONTON SOCIETY
FOR INFORMATION, CALL **429-AIDS**



Volume 3, Issue 1

Jan. 1991

Support Groups Help Strengthen Immune System

This article, by Daniel Goleman, originally appeared in the New York Times Large Type Weekly.

Psychological support not only helps cancer patients deal with the emotional distress of their illness, but may also strengthen their immune systems, new studies suggest.

One study, reported in the September issue of *The Archives of General Psychiatry*, involved patients under treatment for the early stages of a skin cancer that can be fatal, melanoma. As expected, patients who attended psychological support groups did much better on psychological tests than those who did not. But they also did better on measures of a cell in the immune system that fights tumor growth.

"The groups change patients' attitudes and mood for the better," said Dr. Fawzy I. Fawzy, a psychiatrist at the medical school of the University of California at Los Angeles, who lead the new study. "But the question is, does this psychological improvement relate to their physical state? I think the evidence now suggests it does."

Although many researchers remain skeptical, others say that support groups should be a routine part of cancer treatment. "Our medical care for cancer just doesn't tell you what to do at

three in the morning when you're wondering if you'll live to see your daughter graduate from high school," said Dr. David Spiegel, a psychiatrist at Stanford medical school. "And if you reduce that kind of stress, it has a positive effect on the immune system."

Support groups may help in handling the emotional stress of other diseases as well. Dr. Fawzy studied 80 patients being treated for the early stages of malignant melanoma in a cancer clinic at the U.C.L.A. medical school. Half were assigned at random to the support groups in addition to having their tumors removed, while the other half simply underwent surgery.

The groups met for an hour and a half once a week for six weeks. The patients learned such practical things as how to deal with the hazards of sun exposure and how to handle such problems as loneliness, fear, and depression. They were also taught relaxation techniques and offered support to one another as they went through emotional crises.

After six weeks, there were few discernible differences between the groups. But six months after the groups finished, the distinctions were more striking. The patients in the support

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Support Groups

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groups showed improved functioning of immune cells that suppress tumor growth. For example, 24 of the 38 patients who completed the support groups showed an increase of 25% or more in these "natural killer cells", the study said, while only one person who was not in the groups showed such an increase.

The patients who had been in the support groups were also more vigorous, less depressed or confused, and better able to handle their feelings about the cancer by consulting a friend or doctor or "taking one day at a time", the study reported. Those who were not in support groups were more likely to be passive, resigned, preparing themselves for "the worst" and keeping their distress a secret from those close to them. □

Update from the Chairman

Michael Schreiner, Chairman, ANE Board of Directors

Two ANE Board members have been invited to sit as members-at-large on the Board of the EPL-WHIV Society. These two individuals will be Jeff Naylor and Michael Schreiner. In addition, two EPLWHIV Society members will sit on the ANE Board. Bylaws are being changed to make this official.

The Board is also currently reviewing the importance of fundraising. Donald Michaelkow and the fundraising committee have been doing an excellent job of raising much needed funds this year. Recognizing, however, that government funds may be at a standstill, the Board members will be taking a more active role in fundraising. Entertainment '91 books, raffles, and private fundraising events will all be part of the Board's fundraising events.

Lastly, input from the ANE's membership and volunteers is important to the members of the Board. Any concerns, questions, or problems that arise can be voiced to Michael Schreiner through the Network. People are encouraged to give Michael a call to talk about the role and presence of the Board of Directors. □

Coping With Loss and Grief

If you are grieving the loss of someone to AIDS, four support sessions are planned for consecutive Wednesdays starting January 16 through to February 6. The sessions will focus on the participants' needs around grief, hanging on, letting go, and planning for the future.

We have no limit on the number of participants, but we need prior notice before you attend. Contact David Fitzgerald. □

Alberta AIDS Summary to Oct. 31, 1990

Cases by Location

	<u>Alive</u>	<u>Dead</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(90)</u>
Calgary	72	97	169	36
Edmonton	38	43	81	17
North	3	11	14	3
South	10	8	18	6
Totals	123	159	282	62

Feather of Hope Campaign

Good news! Funding has been approved for the training of volunteers for AIDS education in the Native community. January 12 and 13, the Feather of Hope Campaign will begin training this group of about fifteen people. Any aboriginal person is welcome to attend. Native elders will help out in the training. Already, letters have been sent out across the province to Native social workers, reserves, and community groups to tell them about this new initiative. Feather of Hope is also in the process of developing new posters and pamphlets.

The next board meeting is January 11. If anyone has any questions or concerns, feel free to give Marlene, Rose, Ken, or George a call at the Network. □

Computer In-Service

Another in-service is being offered to volunteers who wish to learn more about the Network's computer system and how to use WordPerfect 5.1 (word processing). It will run on Thursday, January 24 from 7 to 9 p.m. This in-service is limited to six participants, so call Steve at 424-4767 to register. □

Counselling Available

A counsellor is available on Thursday evenings beginning November 1. The service is free. Focus of counselling is open to addressing issues around living with HIV, supporting the HIV positive individual, and relationship concerns.

The sessions are held at the ANE office. Each runs one hour. Up to three persons may be seen each evening.

For more information, please contact Dave Fitzgerald at the ANE office. □

Being Gay in the 90's

Starting in January, the AIDS Network and the Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Edmonton will sponsor a seven week workshop series to examine how HIV/AIDS affects the lives of gay men. The goal of this workshop is to change participants' attitudes towards HIV/AIDS, sexuality, and their sexual orientation. The workshop will be held at the Gay and Lesbian Community Centre, 9917 - 112 Street, over seven consecutive Fridays, 7 to 10 p.m. Edward Sandberg and Wayne Hellard will act as facilitators.

Registration will be limited to fourteen participants on a first come, first served basis. Register by phoning Edward at the Network during normal business hours, or by calling the Community Centre - 488-3234 - Fridays from 7 to 10 p.m. Register now! □

EPLWHIV Society

Four members of the Society are involved in the preparation of Facing AIDS: Part II. The two minute TV commercial spots are being prepared by the Provincial AIDS program and will air during prime time on CFRN, CBC, ITV, and other provincial affiliates sometime in February. By featuring real people who are living with HIV infection, the TV spots will attempt to put a much needed human face on the AIDS situation in Alberta.

Our regular support group continues to provide a safe place for HIV/AIDS persons to air their concerns, grievances, problems, etc. We have also started a healing circle, exploring alternative therapies such as therapeutic touch, meditation, visualization, etc., and giving HIV/AIDS persons an extremely positive, supportive environment for self exploration and self healing. For more information, contact the Society.

Our new board has begun forming various committees for dealing with issues surrounding HIV/AIDS. People wishing to help can contact the Society.

As always, donations to our Society are welcome. Your dollars will assist us in staying functional and effective as a Society. □

Thought for December 31

*Where birds have been
Snow fills the nests again
Delicately white.*

- Gerald Vizenor

The seasons remind us that everything changes. Everything comes into being and goes out of being. The circle turns.

The beginning of a new season is a good time to look back at our lives and notice changes. There are new people, new understandings. And people have gone, leaving only empty spaces to remind us they were here with us. The pain we felt has softened, but the hole remains.

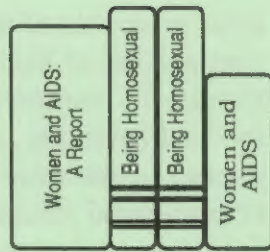
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Look What's New

Books

Blake, Jeanne. *Risky Times: How to Be AIDS-Smart and Stay Healthy*, 1990.

- Included is a parent's guide.



Whyte, Karen and Potter, Bruce. *Report of the Gay and Bisexual Men's Needs Assessment Survey: "Still Loving"*. Calgary, 1990.

- Deals with issues of basic knowledge about HIV/AIDS, safer sex trends, testing, and prevention. Based on the research, the report recommends specific future actions.

Videos

Perspectives on AIDS

- interviews with five people affected by or infected with HIV/AIDS. □

A Special Thank-you...

to the following, for donating gifts to the annual Volunteer Christmas Party:

Brenda C.
Robert O.
Brackets
Brettons
Boystown
Greenwoods Bookshoppe
La Boheme
Maxwell Taylor's/Cheesecake Factory
McKenzie-Fineman Industrial Chemicals
Pheonix Theatre
Primrose Bakery
Princess Theatre
Turtle Creek Cafe □

Deadline for Submissions

V.I.P. News will publish an issue in February. The deadline for submission of articles for this issue is 4:00 p.m. on January 18, 1991. Please submit items to Steve at the ANE office. □

Eroticizing Safer Sex Workshop a Success

On World AIDS Day, December 1st, nineteen men who have sex with other men attended an Eroticizing Safer Sex workshop. Here's what they had to say about the workshop:

*I liked ...the humor in delivering the message
...the comfort level of the group; open and honest
...the humor, spirit, and information
...the honesty*

The workshop is great...

It is friendly and easy going.

...lots of great ideas...

I realize that there is so much possible that is safer...

How open people are; ...a great atmosphere...

(The workshop) ...made me feel relaxed and secure...

It's fun, informative, important, and fulfilling.

It made me feel closer to the gay community.

The workshop breaks down many barriers.

Of those participants responding, 100% indicated they would definitely recommend the workshop to friends!

If you are a man who has sex with other men, why not register for the next workshop on Saturday, January 19th from 1 to 5 p.m.? Call the Safer Sex Hotline at 491-8086. It's OK if you are single or in a relationship, HIV positive or not or don't know, or have attended a workshop once already. Bring a friend or partner or come alone, but come and be ready to have fun! □

Safer Sex Workshops

Eroticizing Safer Sex: A Workshop for Gay Men. Saturday, Jan. 19, 1991, 1 to 5 p.m., AIDS Network.

That Dam Latex: A Workshop for Lesbian Women. Saturday, Jan. 26, 1991, 1 to 5 p.m.

For further information, contact the Network at 424-4767. □

Speakers' Bureau In-Services

The following in-services are being planned for the new year:

- HIV/AIDS and Blood Products
- Facts and Fantasies of Speaking to Junior High Kids
- An Update on the Treatment of HIV/AIDS
- Education as a Tool for Social Change
- HIV/AIDS and You: An Upbeat Presentation□

AIDS in the Workplace: A New Resource

We have just received material from the Canadian AIDS Society (CAS) for use in the workplace. The package of material includes a "Guide for Managers", a "Manual for Employee Education", and employee brochures. A copy of this material is available in the Resource Centre. We encourage volunteers to take a look at it. If you are interested in working in this area, please let us know. Training sessions on the topic will be held in the new year.□

Volunteer Opportunities

Reception:

Volunteers are needed on an ongoing basis to work the reception desk. Even a few hours a month would be greatly appreciated. Contact Anne at the Network - 424-4767.

Womonspace:

Womyn are needed to help with planning new and different displays for Womonspace dances. Volunteers are also needed to help transport the displays to and from the dance. Please contact Heather V. at the Network - 424-4767.□

Support Group News

For three years the ANE has operated a group for "Family/Friends" and a group for the "Worried Well". We recently dropped the title "Worried Well". The group continues to function, but is now "HIV Positive Group for Gay Men". This group focuses on support to HIV positive individuals who are in the early stages of HIV. The family group continues to support family members and friends of HIV positive and AIDS diagnosed persons. In addition, we have started a "Partners/Spouse" group.

We are also happy to announce the start-up of a weekly drop-in group for HIV positive and AIDS diagnosed persons, based at the University of Alberta Hospitals. It runs from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday afternoons. We hope that persons who choose not to come into the Network will see this group as an option for support. Call the Network for information on any of these groups.□

December 31

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There have been other losses, too: ways of living that we put away, attitudes and beliefs that no longer fit us. We are different today than we were one year ago.

As we let go of a season, of a year, of a way of living, we turn and face the future again, renewed, confident, knowing we are in sync with nature - with the rhythm of change, transformation, death, and rebirth.

I am part of this ever-changing world. I let go of the old me. I live in the now with the new me. I live in harmony with the seasons and with the flow of life into new forms.□

Happy New Year!!

from the staff of the AIDS Network
to all our volunteers and associates.

VOLUNTEER EVENTS FOR JANUARY, 1991

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1 12:30 pm PLWA Sup. Grp. (@UofA Hosp) 7pm Women's Safer Sex Wksp Mtg	2 12:30 pm PLWA Sup. Grp. (@UofA Hosp) 7pm Women's Safer Sex Wksp Mtg	3 7pm Buddy Vd	4	5
6 4pm Fdrsg 5pm Brd Exect 6pm EPLWHIV 6pm Fin. Com. 7pm Advoc. Co	7 4pm Fdrsg 5pm Brd Exect 6pm EPLWHIV 6pm Fin. Com. 7pm Advoc. Co	8 12:30 pm PLWA Sup Grp (@UofA Hosp) 7pm Support Services Com.	9 7pm Partners Grp. 5pm Human Res. Com 6pm Education Committee	10	11 9-6 pm Feather of Hp Society Train. Session	12 9-6pm Feather of Hp Society Train Session
13 9-6pm Feather of Hp Society Train. Session	14 4pm Fdrsg Cm 6pm EOLWHIV 6pm Brd of Dir	15 12:30 PLWA Support Grp (@UofA Hosp) 5:30 Wom. SS 7pm Ass't Eroticizers Mtg	16 7pm Bereavmt Group	17 7pm AIDS Vigil Com Mtg	18	19 1-5pm Safer Sex Wkshp for Gay/Bisexual Men
20	21 6pm EPLWHIV	22 12:30pm PLWA Sup. Gr (@UofA Hosp)	23 7pm Partners Grp 7pm Bereavt Grp.	24 7-9 pm Vol. Com. Trg	25	26 1-5pm Safer Sex Workshop for Lesbians
27	28 6pm EPLWHIV	29 12:30pm PLWA Support Group (@U of Hosp)	30 7pm Bereavt. Group			